

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 03245 01 OF 02 050905Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 /062 W
-----050916Z 064138 /12

P R 050740Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 230
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 3245

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT
SUBJECT: STALEMATE CONTINUES

1. DURING THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, THERE HAVE BEEN NO MAJOR CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PAKISTAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE, AND BOTH SIDES CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE TACTICS THEY HAVE BEEN USING FOR THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS. THE PNA CALLS FOR CONTINUING DEMONSTRATIONS, AND THE PM STRIVES FOR AN APPEARANCE OF A RETURN TO NORMALCY. THE NEXT POSSIBLE FLASHPOINTS ARE APRIL SIX AND NINE WHEN THE FRONTIER AND PUNJAB ASSEMBLIES OPEN. THE OPPOSITION HAS CALLED FOR "THE BIGGEST POSSIBLE" DEMONSTRATIONS ON BOTH DAYS.
 2. THE LEVEL OF PROCESSIONS APPARENTLY REMAINED FAIRLY CONSTANT OVER THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS WITH PNA SUPPORTED MARCHES IN A
CONFIDENTIAL
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- PAGE 02 ISLAMA 03245 01 OF 02 050905Z
- NUMBER OF CITIES AND TOWNS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THE PNA CONTINUES TO ENCOURAGE AFFINITY GROUP MARCHES AND WOMEN, LAWYERS, AND JOURNALISTS HAD PROCESSIONS IN VARIOUS CITIES THIS PAST WEEKEND.
3. THE PNA HAS REAFFIRMED ITS POLICY OF CONFRONTATION WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. IN A RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT THE END OF A

TWO-DAY PNA MEETING IN LAHORE ON APRIL THIRD, THE OPPOSITION CALLED FOR LARGE DEMONSTRATIONS IN PESHAWAR ON APRIL 6 AND LAHORE ON APRIL 9 TO PROTEST THE CONVENING OF THE TWO "FRAUDULENT ASSEMBLIES." THE RESOLUTION ALSO URGED THE PEOPLE, IN A GANDHIAN TACTIC NOT USED BEFORE IN PAKISTAN, TO ENFORCE A COMPLETE SOCIAL BOYCOTT OF ALL NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS ELECTED ON THE PPP TICKET. THE PNA CENTRAL COMMITTEE ALSO CONDEMNED POLICE VIOLENCE AND CLAIMED THAT IN SIND OVER A HUNDRED PERSONS HAVE BEEN KILLED IN POLICE AND FEDERAL SECURITY FORCE ACTIONS AND 1500 INJURED. ACTING PNA CHIEF NAWABZADA NASRULLAH KHAN IN A PRESS CONFERENCE STATED THAT THE PNA WILL CONTINUE ITS STRUGGLE AND WOULD NOT STOP UNTIL NEW ELECTIONS FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WERE HELD. HE REITERATED THE PNA REFUSAL TO SIT DOWN AND TALK WITH THE PM IF BHUTTO DID NOT MEET THIS DEMAND.

4. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH RECEIVED PROMINENT COVERAGE IN ALL THE GOVERNMENT OWNED NEWSPAPERS ON APRIL 4, FORMER PNA SECRETARY GENERAL BAJWA (WHO HAD BEEN EXPELLED FROM THE PNA FOR HAVING AN UNAUTHORIZED MEETING WITH BHUTTO) SUGGESTED A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT BE FORMED, WITH BHUTTO AS PM, WHICH WOULD ARRANGE FOR NEW NATIONAL ELECTIONS. CONGEN KARACHI REPORTS INTESNE SPECULATION IN JOURNALISTIC CIRCLES THAT THE STORY WAS CARRIED ON GOVERNMENT ORDERS AS AN INITIATIVE BY BHUTTO SO HE CAN MAKE A GRACEFUL EXIT FROM GOVERNMENT. SUCH A MOVE IS NOT IN KEEPING WITH THE PM'S CHARACTER, HOWEVER, AND WE BELIEVE IT IS MORE LIKELY THE STORY WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO FEED DISSENSION IN PNA RANKS.

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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 03245 01 OF 02 050905Z

5. IN A DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY BE OMINOUS FOR THE GOVERNMENT, THE STUDENTS' ACTION COMMITTEE IN THE FRONTIER PASSED A RESOLUTION DEMANDING THAT SCHOOLS (CLOSED SINCE BEFORE ELECTIONS) BE REOPENED. IF THEY ARE NOT, THE COMMITTEE SAID IT WILL BEGIN TAKING OUT ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS BEGINNING APRIL 6 - COINCIDENT WITH THE OPENING OF THE FRONTIER ASSEMBLY AND THE PNA-SPONSORED DEMONSTRATIONS PROJECTED FOR THAT DAY. BOTH STUDENTS AND LABOR HAVE BEEN QUIESCENT SO FAR AND HAVE NOT PLAYED A ROLE IN THE GOVERNMENT/OPPOSITION CONFRONTATION SIMILAR TO THE ONE THEY PLAYED IN 1968 WHEN THEY WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN AYUB'S OVERTHROW.

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 03245 02 OF 02 051007Z
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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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P R 050740Z APR 77 CORRECTED COPY FOR MCN

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 731
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 3245

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. THE PRIME MINISTER IS TOURING THE COUNTRY, MEETING WITH VARIOUS GROUPS AND ATTEMPTING TO REASSURE THE NATION HE IS BEING REASONABLE IN HIS WILLINGNESS TO MEET THE OPPOSITION. AT THE SAME TIME, HE EMPHASIZES HE WILL DEAL FIRMLY WITH OPPOSITIONISTS WHO BREAK THE LAW. BHUTTO HELD OUT YET ANOTHER OLIVE BRANCH TO THE OPPOSITION DURING A MEETING WITH INDUSTRIALISTS IN KARACHI ON APRIL FIRST. HE SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER ENDING THE EMERGENCY, REPEALING DEFENSE OF PAKISTAN RULES AND RELEASING POLITICAL DETENUS IF THE OPPOSITION AGREED TO DISCUSS THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH HIM. THIS HAS BEEN THE PM'S MOST FORTHCOMING OFFER SO FAR; FORMERLY HE SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER LIFTING THE EMERGENCY ONLY IF THE PNA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS-ELECT TOOK THEIR SEATS IN THE ASSEMBLY. ALTHOUGH THE PM PROBABLY MADE THIS LATEST OFFER IN PART TO SHOW HE IS A REASONABLE PERSON LOOKING FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL AND PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE PNA, THE RISK IS THAT MANY IN THE OPPOSITION MAY SEE HIS LATEST OFFER AS FURTHER PROOF HIS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 03245 02 OF 02 051007Z

POSITION IS WEAKENDING. THE OFFER MAY CONSEQUENTLY ACT ONLY TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE PNA'S RESOLVE NOT TO TALK WITH BHUTTO.

7. THE PM WENT TO QUETTA APRIL THIRD WHERE HE REMAINS TWO DAYS; ON APRIL 7 HE TRAVELS TO LAHORE. HIS TRAVELS HAVE

BEEN BILLED AS "MEET THE PEOPLE" TRIPS, HE HAS BEGUN TO DRIVE IN OPEN JEEPS THROUGH THE CITIES HE IS VISITING TO SHOW HE IS A "MAN OF THE PEOPLE." HE HAS ALSO RETURNED TO HIS FORMER PRACTICE OF MEETING MILITARY LEADERS IN THE CITIES HE VISITS AND WAS HOSTED AT DINNER IN KARACHI BY THE CORPS COMMANDER. BHUTTO'S ABILITY TO GALVANIZE CROWDS AND HIS CHARISMA ARE NO LONGER AS POWERFUL AS IN 1970, BUT THEY CANNOT BE IGNORED. HE UNDOUBTEDLY HOPES TO STRENGTHEN HIS PUBLIC SUPPORT THROUGH PERSONAL APPEARANCES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY DURING THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS. HE IS ALSO ATTEMPTING TO REFURBISH THE PPP'S IMAGE BY CALLING ON THE PARTY TO BECOME CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE, BY MEETING PARTY WORKERS AT EACH OF HIS STOPS, AND BY APPOINTING A GENERALLY ATTRACTIVE CABINET (SEE SEPTTEL).
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